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IT IS NO LONGER YOUR BODY

*His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

I am very much concerned about you, that you have been injured by working. I do not know what sort of *ugra-karma* you were performing, but whatever you do, you must be careful. Your body is dedicated to Krishna, therefore you should not be neglectful about it. You should always think that your body is no more your body, but it is Krishna's body. Therefore you should take care of it. (Letter to Jayapataka, 6 October 1968.)

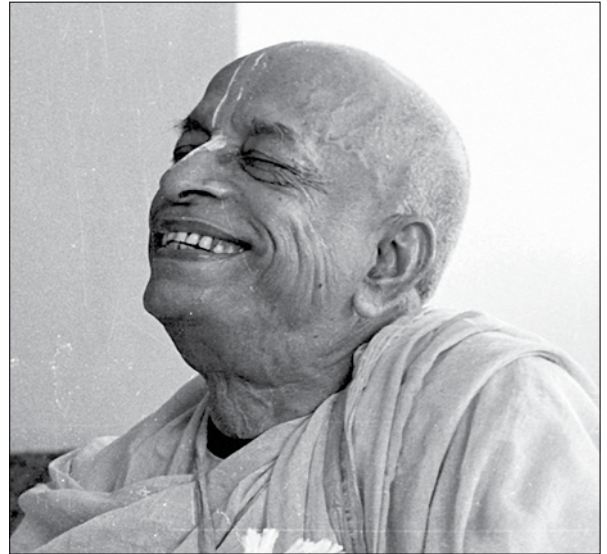
ELEVENTH CANTO AFTER THE TENTH

Sri Srīmad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

You should hear *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* from a real *vaiṣṇava-sādhū* who knows it, who is completely drowned in that ocean of *rādhā-kṛṣṇa-prema*, completely absorbed in that thought. Only from such a person you should hear. Otherwise the reverse effect will be there.

However, after reading or hearing the tenth canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, one has to read the eleventh canto. Unless one reads the eleventh canto he will definitely fall down. This *bhāgavata-śravaṇa* is our daily activity, *nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā*. It is a daily activity. Just like we daily take food, take rest, take bath, pass stool and urine, similarly, this *śrīmad-bhāgavatam-śravaṇa* is a daily activity.

— From a lecture on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 9.2.10 given at Krishna Balaram Temple, Bhubaneswar. 19 June 1993.



*His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

SAMPRADAYAS, MANTRAS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

“*Sampradāya*” is often translated into English as “sect”, which is derived from the Latin term ‘secta’, meaning “a path”. However, the term ‘sect’ is sometimes used to refer to groups of people with a narrow frame of mind who are not open to other’s points of view.

From the etymological point of view, the term ‘*sampradāya*’ is composed of *sam* + *pra* + *dāyaḥ*. The prefix “*sam*” means “*samyak*”, “complete”; the prefix “*pra*” means “*prakarṣeṇa*”, “thoroughly”; and the verbal form “*dāyaḥ*” indicates the act of bestowing. Thus, the term *sampradāya* actually means “the medium through which complete and thorough



The Six Goswamis of Vrindavan

bestowing [of spiritual realization] occurs.” Thus, translating the term ‘*sampradāya*’ as a “narrow sect” actually proves that not only is much lost in translation, but much is also misunderstood.

In the days of the yore, affiliating oneself to a *sampradāya* was not considered something that one would be hesitant to do. Actually, in past ages no one would be accepted as a spiritualist unless they had been admitted to a *sampradāya* — a far cry from the modern humanists who encourage people to declare themselves as 'spiritual but not religious'.

In the introductory prayers to his *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā* commentary on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Srila Sridhar Swami writes:

*sampradāyānurodhena paurvāparyānusārataḥ
śrī-bhāgavata-bhāvārtha-dīpikayāṁ pratanyate*

In accordance with my *sampradāya* and adhering to a logical sequence, I commence this commentary on the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* named *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, the lamp of essential meanings.

Why does he restrict himself to his *sampradāya*? Is it not a narrow frame of vision to describe things only as per one's limited group? Actually, in declaring his adherence to a *sampradāya*, Srila Sridhar Swami demonstrates great honesty. He could have easily claimed to be a knower of the conclusions of all the *sampradāyas*. He may have even read their books. But he does not

claim to be able to write a commentary according to any other *sampradāya* besides his own. This is because one does not gain realized knowledge of all the *sampradāyas* simply by reading their books. Knowledge of practical, day-to-day spiritual activities (*dīna-caryā*), the mood behind the worship rituals (*pūjā-vidhi*), and secrets of mantras are not found in books. These are gained from a personality who belongs to a *sampradāya*. Thus, not claiming expertise in another *sampradāya* is actually a sign of intellectual and spiritual honesty.

The essential idea behind a *sampradāya* is to protect a valuable flow of knowledge and realization. Realization in all fields of spiritual and material knowledge is not possible for a single limited soul. No one can claim to know all fields of knowledge. Everyone who aims for spiritual realization has to make a wise decision as to what he/she considers the aim of life. The *Vṛddha-cāṇakya-nīti-darpaṇa* (15.10) says:

*ananta-śāstram bahulāś ca vidyā
alpaś ca kālo bahu-vighnatā ca
yat sara-bhūtaṁ tad upāsanīyaṁ
haṁso yathā kṣīram ivāmbu-misram*

There are unlimited scriptures regarding innumerable sciences. Time is limited and obstacles are many. Only the essential is to be known and worshiped, in the same way that a divine swan separates the essence (milk) from the inessential water.

Thus, every field of specialized knowledge has its specialized teachers (gurus) and qualified receiving

souls (*adhikārīs*). Sometimes, due to a lack of qualified souls, some specialized branches of learning disappear. A classic example is given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.2-3:

*evam paramparā-prāptam imam rājarāṣayo viduḥ
sa kāleneha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa*

*sa evāyaṁ mayā te 'dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanaḥ
bhakto 'si me sakṣā ceti rahasyaṁ hy etad uttamam*

This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession and the saintly kings understood it in that way. But in course of time the succession was broken, and therefore the science as it is appears to be lost. That very ancient science of the relationship with the Supreme is today told by me to you because you are my devotee as well as my friend and can therefore understand the transcendental mystery of this science.

Seeing Arjuna as the only qualified person (*adhikārī*) for the science, the Supreme Lord re-inaugurates a *sampradāya* on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Thus, even Lord Krishna favors the concept of knowledge transmission through a *sampradāya*.

There are many sciences that have been transmitted faithfully from guru to disciple. Sometimes it may happen that the scriptures that were used as a reference for proving the tenets of that science may no longer be available after certain centuries. Even in such cases, essence seekers do not question the validity of such a *sampradāya*. An example of this is the literature *Sanḡita-ratnākara*, “the jewel-mine of music”. This great composition on traditional Vedic music was written by an author named Sarangadeva in the 13th Century. During the following two centuries, India came under heavy attacks by Muslim invaders, such that by the 15th Century this book became extremely difficult to understand. Fortunately, one of the remaining students of the *sampradāya*, a person named Kallinath wrote a commentary on *Sanḡita-ratnākara* in which he brought out the meanings of the difficult texts. In his commentary on chapter seven, verse ninety-one, he defines *sampradāya* by quoting Lord Vishnu's words:

*śāstrānuktasyāpi śāstreṇābhyanujñātasya śāstrāvirodhino 'rtha-
viśeṣasya ācārya-śiṣya-paramparayā yad-upadeśa-pradānaṁ sa
sampradāya ity etal-lakṣaṇa-lakṣitatvāt. tathā cōktam,*

*yo yat samyag vijānīte sa yad vadati tattvataḥ
sa sampradāyaḥ kathito viṣṇunā loka-jīṣṇunā*

Knowledge, even if not spoken directly in the scriptures, if it is not opposed by them and is supported indirectly by them — if such special knowledge is transmitted in a disciplic succession then

it is known as a *sampradāya*. It is said by Lord Vishnu, the conqueror of the worlds, that, “A *sampradāya* is the truthful transmission of facts by one who knows them correctly and completely.”

In the age of Kali, when the prominence of chanting the names of the Lord Hari is at its pinnacle, it is obvious that receiving a *vaiṣṇava* mantra is the highest spiritual benefit that one can get from a *sampradāya*. There has been confusion about whether initiation is required for chanting such a mantra, especially after the following verse was penned by Sri Lakshmidhar in the *Bhagavan-nāma-kaumudī*:

*ākṛṣṭiḥ kṛta-cetasām sumanasām uccāṭanaṁ cāmhasām
ācaṇḍālam amūka-loka-sulabho vaśyaś ca mukti-śriyaḥ
no dīkṣām na ca sat-kriyām na ca puraścaryām manāg iṣṭate
mantra 'yaṁ rasanā-sprg eva phalati śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmātmakāḥ*

The holy name of Krishna, having attracted the hearts of the saintly souls and having destroyed all sins, is now easily available for all classes of people — all the way down to the *cāṇḍāla*. The holy name has conquered and controlled the opulence of liberation. The holy name does not depend on *dīkṣā*, neither does it wait for any rituals or other preparatory purifications. This mantra is such that it becomes fruitful simply by coming in contact with the tongue.

This verse is also quoted by Srila Rupa Goswami in his book *Padyāvalī* and by Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 15.110. Although it is true that the holy name does not depend on initiation, it should not be interpreted that one does not need initiation to attain perfection in spiritual life. [See the Bhaktivedanta purport to Cc. *madhya* 15.108 for an elaborate discussion as to why one needs *dīkṣa*, second initiation.] The initiation mantra is one of the many things that the guru in a *sampradāya* bestows on a disciple. In the opening verse of his *Mukta-carita*, Srila Raghunath Das Goswami lists all the wonderful gifts that he attained by the mercy of his guru:

*nāma-śreṣṭhaṁ manum api śacī-putram atra svarūpaṁ
śrī-rūpaṁ tasyāgrajam uru-purīm mātthurīm goṣṭhavāṭīm
rādhā-kunḍam girivaram aho rādhikā-mādhavāśām
prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpayā śrī-gurum taṁ nato 'smi*

I offer obeisances to Sri Guru, by whose mercy, I have obtained the topmost holy-name, the divine mantra, and personalities like Lord Sachinandan, Sri Swarup Damodar Goswami, Sri Rupa Goswami and his elder brother Sri Sanatana Goswami and I have also obtained residence in holy places like Sri Mathura, Sri Vrindavan, Sri Radha Kunda, Sri



Mahaprabhu does kirtana with his followers

Govardhan and of course, most importantly, I have attained the desire and hope to render confidential service to Sri Sri Radha Madhava.

Therefore, while gaining knowledge of a mantra from a book can help attain perfection to a certain level, the topmost fruits are only bestowed by the process of surrender to a guru who is in a bona-fide *sampradāya* and has received teachings in the confidential service to the Supreme Lord.

Moreover, various faults are introduced in a mantra if it is not received in a proper way. The *Māṭrkā-bheda-tantra* (12.43) lists some of the faults that enter into a mantra if it is merely received through a book:

*abhaktiś cākṣare bhrāntir luptaś chinnaś tathaiva ca
hrasvo dīrghaś ca kathanam svapne tu aṣṭadhā smṛtaḥ*



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अथ कृष्णक थामुत बिन्द

- (1) *abhakti* — one may end up considering the mantra as merely a collection of syllables without any inherent sense of devotion in it.
- (2) *akṣara-bhrānti* — one may misunderstand one or more syllables in the mantra to be some other syllable.
- (3) *lupta* — one or more syllables may be missing from the mantra.
- (4) *chinna* — in mantras where the syllables are tightly joined together, one may not pronounce half a syllable or a complete syllable.
- (5) *hrasva* — one may utter an elongated syllable (e.g. ā) in its shortened form (a).
- (6) *dīrgha* — one may utter a short syllable (e.g. a) in its elongated form (ā).
- (7) *kathana* — one may speak out a secret mantra to an unqualified person while awake.
- (8) *svapana* — one may speak out a secret mantra to an unqualified person while sleeping.

It is important that a mantra be received from a proper knowledgeable soul from an established *sampradāya*. The *Gautamīya-tantra* (30.6) therefore says, *sampradāya vihinā ye mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ* — “Mantras without a proper *sampradāya* are fruitless.”

Thus, it is the duty of everyone who is interested in spiritual life to approach a proper lineage of spiritual masters for gaining proper realizations in spiritual life. ❀ — HPD.

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